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BY MATTHEW S. CULLINAN and CARLA PRATT

Youth service has become an increasingly viable and favorable solution to the myriad of problems faced by young people and our nation today. The growing number of service and conservation corps evinces this trend. Today, over 50 service and conservation corps in the U.S. successfully instill the ethics of service and citizenship, as well as adding to the education and job skills of participating young people. Unfortunately, most corps remain relatively small (30-200 persons) and depend on a combination of federal, state and local funding to support their operations. As a result, no corps has been able to engage large numbers of young people in these worthwhile endeavors.

The idea of service (other than military) to one's community and country is hardly new. In 1910 William James proposed a young people's campaign of national service—"the moral equivalent of war."[1] He envisioned obligatory service on a large, organized scale, to fill the country's needs and equip its youth with greater discipline and maturity. Though voluntary in nature, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) recognized James's dream of employing great numbers of youth in service to their nation.

The CCC serves as an historical antecedent for today's service and conservation corps and also offers valuable lessons for building a modern program capable of serving thousands of young people. At its peak the CCC enrolled over 500,000 young men and set them to work on conservation projects throughout the United States. It is the only corps ever to engage young people in service on such a large scale. The CCC shows that such an operation can be effective and popular, and it provides unique and valuable lessons for similar efforts in the future. People who desire a return to large-scale federally funded service initiatives should look to the CCC for guidance and inspiration.

Undeniably the U.S. needs a major program aimed at helping its young people. A significant portion of America's youth are considered "at risk"—socio-economically disadvantaged, English-deficient, and physically and mentally handicapped.[2] Substance abuse, violence, delinquency, isolation and disillusionment also jeopardize

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young people from all socio-economic levels, placing them "at risk." Though the need for assistance is clear, some remaining questions hinder federal aid. In an era of federal, state, and local fiscal crisis, who can sponsor and run a program that would be the nation's "moral equivalent of war"?

In seeking answers to questions about the problems facing young people today, this paper will complete an historical analysis of the Civilian Conservation Corps in order to glean lessons concerning large-scale, federally sponsored service programs; discuss the problems faced by young people today; and explore the feasibility and design of a modern youth service corps modeled on the CCC, yet relevant to the unique demands of the '90s.

I. The Civilian Conservation Corps

Challenges faced by young men in the Depression Era were significant. The unemployment situation, bad in 1930, got worse during the first few years of the decade, and reached crisis proportions by 1933. In that year, the percentage of the total labor force left unemployed was up 21.7 percentage points from 1929. Youth were particularly hard hit. Census figures show that in 1930, 6.4 percent of all gainful male workers aged 10-19 were unable to find employment and 6.9 percent of males aged 20-24 were unemployed and seeking employment. These percentages are higher than those of any other age group. (Employment for men aged 25-70 ranged from 4.6 percent to 5.8 percent and averaged 5.26 percent.)[3]

A number of socially devastating problems ensued from the nation's unemployment woes. People were simply too poor to provide the basics of food and shelter for their families. Idleness led to increasing crime, vagrancy and drunkenness among young men. A loss of self-esteem and ambition threatened a generation of youth with severely limited opportunities.[4] These young people and their families began to lose hope for themselves and faith in the United States. They could not be blamed for having little, if any, sense of citizenship or gratitude to their nation.

Franklin Roosevelt conceived the Civilian Conservation Corps as his solution to three domestic problems of the United States. The CCC would relieve unemployment by putting young men to work nationwide. Simultaneously, it would make great strides in soil and forest conservation, which would create future wealth for the nation. Above and beyond material gains, Roosevelt believed the Corps would conserve America's human resources. He foresaw the "[elimination] to some extent at least [of] the threat that enforced idleness brings to spiritual and moral stability."[5] In addition to U.S. needs, the CCC also appealed to several popular national philosophies: William James's notion of the "moral equivalent of war," as well as the environmental conservation concerns inherited from FDR's cousin Theodore Roosevelt and the great agrarian myth dating from Thomas Jefferson.

Despite conservative concern that the CCC was a wasteful and expensive program which might cancel existing federal programs, the Corps received congressional approval. FDR established the CCC on April 5, 1933. With some difficulty, Roosevelt persuaded the secretaries of War, Agriculture, the Interior and Labor to help the CCC director with some aspects of Corps administration and operation. Most reluctant to participate was the Department of War, for the army shied from assuming a responsibility not in line with its stated mission—defense of the country. Eventually though, the army did support the CCC, especially when the army learned Corps camps would provide active duty positions for army reserve officers.[6]

In nearly three months the Department of War completed the largest peacetime mobilization to date, building 1300 camps nationwide to house the 275,000 recruits.[7] Yet this was only the beginning. At its peak, the Corps enrolled 500,000 young men in more than 2000 camps nationwide.

The Corps accomplished all kinds of conservation efforts. For example, in 1940 alone the men planted 287,117 acres of trees (at a thousand

trees per acre), built 5,949 miles of telephone lines, constructed 907 reservoirs, built 3,666 buildings for public use, fought fires, moved shrubs and trees to improve the land, etc.[8] This work brought untold benefit to the United States, greatly improving and conserving its natural resources.

In fact, benefits of the CCC extended to most parties involved with young people. For parents the CCC provided a $25/month increase in income, as well as the knowledge that their boys were safe and bettering themselves under the guidance of a respectable organization. Committees benefited from the unemployment relief, subsequent decrease in crime, and conservation projects affected by the Corps. Finally, politicians heartily endorsed the CCC, in view of the program's success and the bit of "pork barrel" it secured for their districts.

Another less tangible benefit to the United States, nationally and on a local level, was the "Americanizing" influence of CCC on its members.[9] The camps brought together individuals of different communities and home environments. Boys' horizons broadened due to their experiences at camp and their interaction with other enrollees. As a result, many young men became involved and interested in national problems.

The greatest beneficiaries of the CCC program were the enrollees themselves. The benefits of the camp far exceeded the basic essentials provided—food, shelter, and employment. Young men acquired intangible rewards of discipline, structure, and a sense of purpose. They learned how to obey orders, to cooperate with others. As one enrollee remarked, "I joined because I thought it might make a man of me, and it did all right."[10]

The concrete success and productivity of the conservation camps boosted Corps morale. As enrollees completed various projects they gained confidence in their own abilities and pleasure from the knowledge that their work would benefit others. Of course, such employment had numerous practical advantages as well. The young men gained a wide variety of work experiences and skills that would help later in their job searches. As the CCC reputation grew, many former CCC enrollees found themselves welcomed by employers. From July 1940 to June 1941, about 390,000 Corps members completed their training and left the camp for civilian employment; 57,581 junior enrollees received jobs even before completing their training; and 14,291 enrollees joined the armed forces.[11] Employers and vocational experts voiced approval of the Corps as a training agency.[12]

Corps members also benefited from the emphasis on education, later added to the CCC program, and from life skills training they received at the camps. Camp life often transformed enrollees from weak, undernourished youth to well-muscled, healthy men. At camp the men ate nutritious food; exercised regularly, on and off the job; and received training in health care, first aid and safety. Camp administrators made sure the enrollees maintained personal hygiene, understood and practiced safety regulations, and appreciated the importance of health maintenance. Corps members also enjoyed the recreational and athletic activities provided at camp. Special efforts were made to ensure that youth had the time and facilities for leisure time activities. At some camps, the enrollees planned and ran the activities themselves. Various kinds of activities were encouraged: physical, craft work, rhythmic and dramatic, literary discussion, nature study, social

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and civic.[13]

The CCC proved enormously successful, yet was not without its failures. Future youth program planners should consider various aspects of the CCC to determine which components might still be useful, and which should be changed and set aside. Much will be learned by examining several facets of camp operation in detail.

Organization and Administration

From its start, the CCC bore characteristics of an organization "doing an emergency job with resources which were to a considerable extent already on hand."[14] The Director, Robert Fechner, and his personal staff were the only independent operators with authority over the CCC. Others involved were linked to the Departments of War, Agriculture, the Interior, or Labor. These executive agencies had been in operation for some years already, and each brought its own methods, traditions and biases to the Corps. Final decisions on major policy aspects of the CCC were left to President Roosevelt.

The duties of each department were clearly established and divided to avoid most friction between administrators; yet, inevitably, a few problems resulted from the CCC's organization. Roosevelt was too heavily burdened with other concerns to devote sufficient time to matters of the Corps. Though FDR made notable efforts to attend to the affairs of the Corps, the CCC probably would have benefited either if Roosevelt had more time for the program or if the CCC's director had been given the bureaucratic muscle to enforce decisions. (By the time final authority for CCC activities was transferred to the director, other events had combined to bring the Corps to its end.) Some friction and departmental jealousy existed among CCC advisors. Each agency at some time or other thought the Corps would be better run if under its sole direction. This tension also tainted the agencies' relationship with Fechner. In particular, the director and the army were often at odds over CCC policy and administration. Fechner's efforts to centralize authority angered the other players in CCC programming and contributed to the Corps' destruction. In retrospect, a leadership more unified at the outset might have been more effective.

The actual operation of camps was performed by federal, state and local units. For instance, while the Department of Labor supervised the selection of enrollees, state relief organizations interviewed and selected youth to participate in the Corps. Each camp had a staff to direct its projects. The army often filled its staffing positions with army reserve soldiers. The Departments of Agriculture and the Interior had no such reserve of trained officials, and thereafter chose civilians to fill staffing slots. Technical staffers nominally were chosen based on their technical competence, but in reality most were selected because of their political influence; they had to receive recommendations from state congressmen. Foresters almost unanimously opposed this criterion for selection.[15] Many objected that the quality of the technical staff was sacrificed to political considerations. (Congressmen, of course, wholeheartedly approved of the setup.) Some who were opposed to the political factor argued that educational personnel, selected solely on the basis of merit, were a better lot. Notwithstanding political considerations or competence, low salaries and government refusal to provide employees with civil service status played the biggest role in limiting the Corps' appeal to qualified personnel.

Curriculum

The education component of the program was added on November 22, 1933 after George Zook, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, campaigned for its inclusion. Education's exclusion from the original design of the CCC indicates its tertiary role in the program. It is significant that camp education was supervised by the War Department who had little interest in educating CCC participants. Camp administrators paid lip service to education's importance, but it was implemented unevenly; as a result, education is widely considered one of the CCC's shortcomings. This is true also because education was never one of the director's priorities. In a hearing before the House Committee on Labor, Fechner

commented that the program had "two principal objectives—the relief of unemployment and the accomplishment of useful work."[16] No educator had a direct voice in shaping Corps policy; the national education director, working in advisory capacity to the army, never held a seat on the CCC director's advisory council.[17]

The Office of Education provided teaching materials and outlines of instruction for camp leaders to follow. It appointed an educational advisor for each camp, and enrollees chose their own educational assistants. The program sought "to develop in each man his powers of self-expression...his pride in cooperative endeavors...and his understanding of social and economic conditions," and to improve his health habits, vocational abilities, and appreciation of nature.[18] The Education Office hoped men would emerge from the camps better able to work together, find employment, be productive citizens and live happy lives.

Despite many hurdles, the education program did manage to teach illiterates to read and write, help some enrollees to continue high school or college work, and encourage craft and vocational work. One particularly successful component of the education program taught enrollees work skills on-the-job; a usually well organized program of instruction sought to ensure that Corps members understood what they were doing and why. Some have criticized that not every opportunity for on-the-job instruction was seized, but this was true only rarely, and no matter how well or poorly executed, the program always proved valuable.[19] However, the effect of the education program off-the-job was not what it should have been. Its goals were good, but its execution was lacking. The program would have been more successful had it been incorporated earlier and viewed by all involved as an important CCC priority.

CCC Enrollment Practices

The CCC enrolled men, primarily those between the ages of 18 and 23 (92% of enrollees were under 20.)[20] Around nine percent of youth enrolled were black, and a number of men from other national backgrounds also participated. Most enrollees came from poor families and had little or no work experience. Fifty-six percent of enrollees came from rural environments; others were from small or large (only 16%) urban centers.[21] Educational backgrounds varied, some youth having no experience in school, others having completed high school, and a handful having finished college. The primary goal of CCC interviewers was to admit those youth capable of being trained and profiting from Corps training. Eligible youth possessed adequate (usually average) intelligence and emotional stability.

Roosevelt also used entrance into the CCC to placate unemployed and disgruntled WWI veterans. This proved to be an important political move, even though the CCC was not meant for veterans who were much older than the average enrollee. Roosevelt's action was appreciated by many, and political support for the CCC increased. Local men with experience in conservation also were included to help with camp operations; this aided in building local support for the program.

In 1935, after he was appointed head of the Works Progress Administration, Harry Hopkins convinced Roosevelt to require that all future enrollees and employees of the CCC be taken from public relief roles.[22] This became the point of contention for numerous debates about CCC policy. The CCC director as well as most members of Congress did not want to limit enrollment to those on relief. This requirement increased bureaucratic infighting significantly, as well as hurt Corps recruitment and the popular perception of the CCC's mission. Because of the requirement, many developed a too-narrow view of the Corps as a "relief agency." When the country's need for relief expired, so did the CCC.

Problems Widely Recognized, and Factors Contributing to the Demise of the CCC

The CCC desertion rate averaged up to 20 percent. This was a problem never addressed adequately and one that could have been helped through certain measures: more careful selection of youth, use of more accurate prediction scales and better consideration of the particular camps'

needs; more careful assignment to camps, to fit enrollees' interest and talents; and individual and effective guidance for enrollees, including a comprehensive camp adjustment program.

The CCC was slow to develop a coordinated employment agency. Therefore, unemployment of former enrollees continued to be a problem longer than necessary. Eventually the nation's economy and employment needs picked up of its own accord.

Black enrollees in camps were treated well, by most accounts. A number of camps were racially mixed, and blacks and whites shared quarters and camp activities. However, the number of blacks appointed as camp officials was low, when qualified candidates seemed to exist.

The CCC gradually became outmoded. It came to be viewed as a "relief organization," when the country no longer needed employment agencies. Furthermore, the CCC never had a permanent identity; its structure had a temporary look, its goals were at times unclear (even to its administrators), and its enrollment was limited to a politically weak sector of the population, which many of the middle and upper classes viewed as lacking some morals or a work ethic. Any future youth program will have to avoid the pitfall of being targeted or serving exclusively a constituency with little political voice, namely the poor and the disadvantaged. Without a middle-class constituency, an initiative, regardless of its merits, is bound to suffer from inconsistent funding and be labled a "poverty" program.

II. The Dilemma of American Youth Today

The United States again faces a crisis among its youth. As did many during the Depression, young people today face innumerable obstacles to successful and fulfilling lives. Some challenges include drugs, crime, poverty, and inadequate education. Hindered by their environment and misfortune, many youth lack the skills, opportunity, incentive, and possibly the self-confidence necessary to become self-sufficient and productive citizens. With little hope in their futures, these youth never acquire a sense of citizenship or a notion of service to their community and country. Thus they lack the spirit which holds America together. Increasing anger, violence and social tension—a rift among young American people—is the result of their growing discontent.

Health Risks

Life and health-threatening factors are of serious concern for all young people. Though decreased in the last decade, the number of accident-related deaths remains high, especially for youth. The deaths of young people in accidents totaled 15,227 in 1986. In the same year, 5,522 youth died in homicides or legal interventions, and 5,120 youth committed suicide. The increased suicide rate is associated almost universally with "competitive pressures for success, to the decline of the nuclear family, and, more generally to ennui—an increased sense of aloneness and depression in our society."[23]

Of the challenges that threaten youth every day, drugs are most prevalent; they have made serious inroads to youth culture at every socio-economic level. Crack/cocaine, marijuana and alcohol lead the list of most abused drugs. In a 1985 survey, over five percent of young people 12 to 17 years old admitted using cocaine, 23.7 percent had used marijuana, and 55 percent had drunk alcohol. While fewer youth in the population as a whole are using these drugs than did ten years ago, drugs continue to pose a sobering

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threat.[24] Crack use has become epidemic among inner-city, minority populations.[25] While not as well publicized, marijuana use is still widespread, with more than seven million youth admitting recent use of marijuana.

These drugs and others threaten the very fabric of society and family structure, and often have adverse legal and medical consequences as well. During 1987, "350,000 (youth) were arrested for drug abuse violations and an estimated 150,000 were in jail, prison or juvenile correction facilities for drug-regulated offenses."[26] In 1986, hospitals treated more than 35,000 youth for medical emergencies linked to drug use.[27] Furthermore, the correlation between drug use and suicide is becoming more and more evident.

Less sensational, but still serious, is our country's alcohol problems. In 1988, 63.9 percent of high school seniors admitted to having drunk alcohol within the previous thirty days. 4.2 percent said they drank daily. Alcohol use is associated with a host of personal and behavioral problems, and it is frequently identified with illegal activity as well. Arrests often are made for "liquor law violations, drunkenness, or driving under the influence."[28] Though increased public awareness and more severe penalties have lessened the number of drunk driving incidents, they—and other effects of alcohol abuse—continue to pose a notable threat to all society.

Crime

Young people in the United States are more likely to perpetrate a crime or be involved in a crime than any other segment of American society. In 1987 alone, nearly 1.3 million youths were arrested for serious crimes (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and arson included). Of those incarcerated for various crimes, the majority are poor, male, from urban environments, and less educated than the population as a whole.[29] Minorities compose a significant portion of those arrested. Recent studies have shown that one in four black men between the ages of 20 and 29 is currently in prison, on parole, or on probation.[30]

More often youth are the victims. In fact, "more than one of every six 16 to 24-year-olds were victimized during 1987, or nearly twice the proportion (experienced by) persons over 25 years of age."[31] Crimes range from petty theft to violent crimes, such as rape and assault. Their numbers are significant: in 1987, more than 2.2 million violent crimes were completed or attempted against youth.[32]

Poverty

Nearly 17 percent of all youth ages 15 to 21 live in poverty. This is tragic because of the problems associated directly with poverty, such as hunger and appalling living conditions, as well as other difficulties associated indirectly, including a much lower rate of school completion, a greater number of births out-of-wedlock, and an increased likelihood of crime or substance abuse. A racial dimension to the problem is evident. Over 35 percent of black youth and 27 percent of Hispanic youth live below the poverty level, as compared to 12.1 percent of white young people.[33] Single parent families are hardest hit, especially those led by minority women.

Poverty among today's youth affects the lives of tomorrow's families; the affliction finds an end only rarely. A 1987 study concluded that "more than one of every four young families and sub-families lives below the poverty line. Among those headed by a person under age 25, over one-third live below the poverty line." This was the result of a steady deterioration of young families' incomes, evident over the previous two decades.[34]

Education

Today's young adults are much more likely to complete high school—and even college—than the youth of the Depression Era. Since that time, rates of school completion have improved dramatically; however, these rates have leveled somewhat since 1975, and an end to the problem of dropouts is far from over. The number of dropouts remains high, and young people who do not complete high school have many fewer opportunities today than even twenty years ago.

Now, in a single year, nearly one million youth drop out of school.[35] Minority populations sustain the greatest percentages of high school

dropouts. In the fall of 1986, over one-third of Hispanic youth age 18 to 24 were dropouts, about 17 percent of black youth, and 13.5 percent of whites. Generally, males from low-income and less educated families are most likely to quit school before earning a diploma.[36]

Implications of the U.S. dropout rate spell disaster for individuals, their families, and the nation. One study points out that by the year 2000, roughly 10 million of today's pre-school and school-age population will become dropouts. Yet projections are that in nine years all new jobs will require a work force with a median education level of 13.5 years.[37] That means most young people who have left school early will be unqualified to fill available employment positions. Currently, unemployment rates reflect the imprudence of leaving school early: a staggering 20 percent of all dropouts are unemployed—nearly 38 percent of young black dropouts.[38] They will fall farther and farther behind the job market as American industry becomes more service- and technology-oriented. Without decent job opportunities, these youth will be especially susceptible to other problems and temptations confronting young people, such as crime and drug use.

A U.S. underclass is beginning to form, as incomes of high school dropouts are declining. From 1973 to 1984, the real mean earnings of 20- to 24-year-old dropouts declined 41.6 percent (from $11,210 to $6,552). The decline for young black males was significantly higher—61.3 percent. (It is interesting to note that in the same period, black male college graduates raised their income by 16.6 percent. The ever-increasing gap between our society's richest and poorest is easily understood in light of these figures.) The economic loss of young dropouts is incredible. For example, the 973,000 high school dropouts of 1981 will lose $228 billion in personal lifetime savings, which will cost society $68.4 billion in tax revenues.[39] The drain on the U.S. economy caused by underskilled, employable high school dropouts will only become worse as fewer job opportunities are available for a growing number of dropouts.

In Sum

It is hardly surprising, given the problems all young people face, that many have lost the connection between being a citizen of the United States (with all the potential benefits attached to that) and the obligation one has to maintain or improve the opportunities available in our nation. Feeling they reap no benefits of U.S. citizenship, or that they are being hurt or slighted by the system, young people today feel no gratitude nor obligation to their country. The lack of active citizenship among young adults is evident in their declining voter participation and decreasing confidence in governmental institutions. Indeed, the value of service to the nation and to others is becoming alien to many young people, as money and material riches have become the preeminent measures of success in our society.

Just as the CCC helped young men during the Depression, a new version could help inculcate youth with an ethic of citizenship and service, and the demands and duties related to both.

The breakdown of individual citizenship is mirrored in the breakdown in American society. As communities start to lose members, the whole of society begins to fall apart, torn by mistrust and misunderstanding. A growing gap exists between races, as well as the rich and the poor. Events in Brooklyn, Bensonhurst, Washington, DC, Louisiana, and elsewhere point to the increasing tensions between whites and blacks, as well as other ethnic groups. Despite the progress of the past twenty-five years, the prejudicial and communication barriers, plus frustration born of severe conditions, continue to prevent an absolute heal-

ing.

Regardless of socio-economic background, young people today can benefit from a shared experience of serving their communities and country. Just as the CCC helped young men during the Depression, a new version could help inculcate youth with an ethic of citizenship and service, and the demands and duties related to both.

III. A Corps for Today's Youth

The United States needs a nationwide, coordinated program to address the problems of today's young people. A large, federally sponsored youth corps like the CCC should be our aim.

What would the Civilian Conservation Corps look like in the 1990s? Would its goals need to differ much, to address the social ills of this generation of youth? Compared to the 1930s, contemporary problems are more concentrated in cities, more focused on education needs (because of the increasing relation between education and employment options), and perhaps more serious. Fundamentally, though, they are similar. Unemployment and poverty are widespread, and crime, substance abuse, and hopelessness plague youth of today, as they did during the Depression. Finally, a renewed sense of citizenship and national service among youth is necessary now, as much as it was in the 1930s.

Therefore the goals of a modern corps would be similar to those of the CCC. Citizenship, discipline, and various work skills could be taught today through a program much like that of Roosevelt's Corps. Education would be an early emphasis and priority. Corps members' continuation of education or employment in a worthwhile job would be an important post-program goal, essential to the program's impact on enrollees and their communities. These two efforts were not pursued wholeheartedly by the CCC, and are sometimes considered its failures.

The community service aspect of the CCC was a tremendous success. Conservation efforts by Corps members had extensive and far-reaching benefits. Any youth corps today would do well to adopt a variety of service projects which would profit and build support in its community, as well as imbue enrollees with an appreciation for serving others and their nation.

How long would it take to instill youth with values of citizenship and national service, as well as help fit them for healthy, productive and self-sufficient lives? How should a new national youth corps be structured? The CCC had rolling admissions; enrollees stayed with the Corps for various lengths of time, from a few months to a couple years. Yet the CCC had, at times, a 20 percent dropout rate. It had been said that more enrollees might have persisted with the program if they'd had a better orientation or adjustment course. Entry period advising certainly is necessary; a program established so that all enrollees begin and end together might also prove advantageous. Such a structure might help enrollees encourage each other to finish and undoubtedly would foster corps esprit as well.

The length of the program could be set almost anywhere from six months to a year. Young people sometimes have trouble committing themselves to a lengthy program, but the period of activity must be long enough to teach them something substantial. A nine-month program, set up like a school year, might be best to attract a diverse group; it would allow some high school graduates to participate before going on to college.

CCC enrollees received a low wage for their labor. Since participants' living expenses would be covered by a similar modern corps, corps members would not need to be paid much money during the program. Perhaps a portion of their wages could be withheld until the end of the program, then given as a scholarship for work, education, or other pursuits.

Administration

The CCC was administered by four executive agencies, as well as its own director's board. As we have seen, this sometimes proved difficult. The Corps probably would have benefited from a more simplified structure which would eliminate interagency rivalry.

Military administration, which proved effective for the CCC, could work well for a youth corps today, also. The military services offer the best potential for building a large-scale program. The services are among the only organizations which have existing facilities, manpower, and training experience on a national scale. Furthermore, a quasi-military program could provide unique benefits associated with military prestige and discipline.

If a branch of the services were to assume responsibility for a youth corps, it probably would facilitate operations if the director of the program were chosen from military ranks. The CCC might have run more smoothly if one department had provided sole direction for the Corps and had done all the hiring and programming. With their experience producing an all-volunteer force, the military services hold promise as the group most capable of operating a large-scale, volunteer service organization. While bureaucratic in-fighting certainly has not decreased in Washington, a new version of the CCC would benefit programmatically and politically from input by the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor. Nevertheless, the clear lesson of the CCC is that an executive agency with sufficient capabilities and political weight should oversee the program.

When considering the four active services (Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines), the National Guard and the Reserves, we found the National Guard particularly well suited for operating a national program for youth. While the Guard serves an important national security purpose, it also has a unique philosophy of social responsibility and working ties with communities throughout the country. The federal, state and local character of the National Guard, as well as its wide range of facilities, make it an ideal oversight agency for a new CCC.

Curriculum

As CCC planners concluded, educational activity too much like that found in a classroom is doomed to fail. Yet education should be a central part of any corps' activity, considering the import of one's education on future employment options. Youth corps educators of today can take their cue from CCC planners and design a program which seizes every opportunity for on-the-job training. This has proven very effective in a number of circumstances. Other efforts should ensure literacy among enrollees and help for interested students to pursue their education.

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Enrollment

The CCC accepted young men of a wide range of ages, races, and educational backgrounds, though most enrollees came from rural environments and had little or no work experience. Practically, a modern corps could plan to enroll youth who were out of school legally and unemployed. Youth would become eligible at sixteen. Perhaps a new program could target youth ages 16 to 22.

A future corps probably would not want to limit itself to "at-risk" youth. The CCC's similar restrictions to applicants from U.S. relief roles caused significant problems for admissions officials (who could not find suitable applicants in sufficient numbers) and for the Corps itself. If a modern corps were to employ only "at-risk" youth, it would risk being labeled a "welfare" or "relief" organization—this is part of what led to the CCC's downfall. The twin misfortunes of such a label are its failure to describe the function of the corps

fully, and the idea that "at-risk" youth, if they are told constantly they are "at-risk," will remain so. In reality, the CCC's goal was not merely employment or relief; it also sought to instill Corps members with the important values of service and citizenship, and to perform work of value to the community. A corps that fulfills these latter goals will confer privilege and honor to its members. The new CCC would do well to employ a mix of youth for these reasons, since it then would have the benefit of exposing and educating youth to the worth of those from different backgrounds; thus it would begin to heal the rifts of modern society. The CCC did this by bringing together youth of both urban and rural backgrounds, and, in some cases, whites, blacks and Native Americans.

Unless it sought to be or fit in with a rehabilitation program, the corps would not want to enroll youth who were caught up in the legal system or who currently were involved with drugs. As with the CCC, any modern corps should seek participants who can be expected to complete the period of training.

Post-Program Goals

After leaving the CCC, several benefits were extended to past enrollees. They were better fitted for employment—self-confident, skilled in a variety of jobs, disciplined, and accustomed to working with others. Furthermore, the Corps had a good reputation as a training agency, which made employers more willing to hire its graduates. Any modern corps should strive to pass similar benefits to its enrollees.

A new program could improve upon the CCC's post-program assistance. A contemporary corps should make a better effort to place its graduates in jobs or educational programs. Perhaps some sort of agreement with local employers could make a number of jobs available to corps graduates. Local schools and vocational training centers might reserve slots in their classes for corps graduates. The corps could establish a mentor program, which would begin during corps training and continue afterwards, to assist corps graduates with their work and personal development plans. Again, the National Guard's network of citizen-soldiers could provide both strong mentors and job opportunities for the program. Special efforts should be made to match mentors and corps members who share ethnicities.

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The U.S. cannot neglect the problems of its youth. The dilemmas of this segment of the population are already impacting the well-being of the whole of society, thus damaging U.S. national interests. The U.S. can and should learn from its history; our experience proves that something can be done to help today's youth, through an agency such as the CCC. Those who seek a solution to the problems of American youth should take heart and take action. A national youth corps is the right answer.

Policy Questions on Future of Youth Service Prepared for the Youth Policy Institute

1) Who participates in youth service programs? What is the target group, if any, and why?

This bears directly on the issue of diversity in youth service corps and targeted versus non-targeted programs.

2) Should the objective of youth service and conservation corps be service and citizenship or employment and training? Are the two sides exclusive?

3) Can the U.S. afford large-scale service programs in this era of large deficits?

-Are there economies of scale?

-What are the benefits of large vs. small organizations?

-Can we restructure existing budget priorities to fund such a program? Why this type of program instead of some other?

4) How can programs integrate service and education in a more coordinated fashion?

ENDNOTES

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[3] "Percent of Gainful Workers in Unemployment Classes A and B, Color, Nativity and Age, for the United States: 1930," Table 8, Abstract of the 1930 Census—Unemployment, 473.
[4] Salmond, John A., *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press: 1967), 3, 4, 112.
[5] Kenneth Holland and Frank Ernest Hill, *Youth In the CCC*, (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1942), 13.
[6] Roosevelt Papers, Roosevelt to Fechner, April 12, 1935.
[7] Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps*, 47-48.
[8] Holland and Hill, *Youth In the CCC*, 114.
[9] Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps*, 130.
[10] Holland and Hill, *Youth In the CCC*, 124.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., 241.
[13] Ibid., 207-208.
[14] Ibid., 30.
[15] Ibid., 119.
[16] Hearings before the House Committee on Labor on H.R. 6180, 75th Congress, First Session, 98.
[17] Holland and Hill, *Youth In the CCC*, 101.
[18] Civilian Conservation Corps Regulations, War Department, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), 1937, 164-165.
[19] Ibid., 253.
[20] Ibid., 60.
[21] Ibid., 61.
[22] Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps*, 60.
[23] Wetzel, James R., "American Youth: A Statistical Snapshot," The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, August 1989, 30-31.
[24] Ibid.
[25] "1988 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse," National Insitute on Drug Abuse.
[26] "Crime in the United States," Federal Bureau of Investigation, (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1988), 180.
[27] Wetzel, "American Youth," 31.
[28] Ibid., 30.
[29] Ibid., 34-35.
[30] Harrison, Rainie, "Black and White in America," *U.S. News and World Report*, July 22, 1991, p. 19.
[31] Wetzel, "American Youth," 33.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., 6.
[34] *The Forgotten Half*, 18-22.
[35] "America's Shame, America's Hope," 3.
[36] Wetzel, "American Youth," 13-14.
[37] "America's Shame, America's Hope," 2.
[38] Wetzel, "American Youth," 20-21.
[39] Ibid., 2-5.